John Carter Brown.

53:19

Shepard, Thomas
and
White, John.

# NEVV ENGLANDS LAMENTATION

FOR

*Old Englands* preſent errours, and diviſions, and their feared future deſolations if not timely prevented.

Occaſioned by the increaſe of Anabaptiſts, Rigid Separatiſts, Antinomians and Familiſts.

TOGETHER WITH

Some ſeaſonable remedies, againſt the infection of thoſe errours, preſcribed

IN

A Letter ſent from Mr *Thomas Shepard*, ſometime of *Immanuell* Colledge in *Cambridge*, and now Miniſter of the Goſpell at *Cambridge* in *New England*, to a godly friend of his in *Buers* in *Suffolk*.

*Imprimatur*, JAMES CRANFOE.

*LONDON*,
Printed by *George Miller*, MDC.XLV.

Good Sir;

THere comming to my hands a Letter that was sent by a godly Minister in New-England to one of my Parishioners, against Anabaptists, Separatists, and Antinomians, and Familists; and knowing that it hath done much good, I desire to have it printed, that it may be more publike; I pray you consult with some Divines of your acquaintance, and let them, if they think it fit, prefix a Title to it; and so with my love to you, I rest,

Yours,

*Buers*, March 19.

JOHN THORNBECKE.

New-

JOHN CARTER BROWN



# NEVV-ENGLANDS Lamentation,

FOR

*Old-Englands* preſent Errours and Diviſions, and their feared future deſolations, if not timely prevented.

*Much beloved in Chriſt:*

THE groanings of your Letter to your Siſter concerning the ſad condition of *England*, together with her deſires to me, to write to you, have made me more ready to yeeld hereunto, who am not yet unmindfull either of the place in generall where once I was an unfruitfull inhabitant, nor of your ſelfe in ſpeciall, whom I have cauſe to remember, not only in regard of your reſpect to my ſelfe ſo unworthy, all the time I was with you, but alſo in regard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and feare of his Name, I then apprehended, and by your Letters ſee ſtill continued in you; I confeſſe I have long feared a Sword to come upon that pleaſant Land, to make this unthankfull and evill generation underſtand, what they would not by the voice of his Goſpel while it rid circuit amongſt them; And what yet the Lord will doe, we that live ſo far from you, and heare and ſee little, can therefore ſpeake little; Gods hidden ones, that be neare him, and obſerve his goings, and compare them with his word, may underſtand much; Only this I doe beleeve, that the late differences and breaches amongſt the godly themſelves, together with the ſpreading of the contagion of corrupt opinions, among

persons formerly well reputed of for modest, humble Christians, is a certain presage (if the Lord suddenly heale not) of worse dayes then ever yet *England* saw; Such cracks and flawes in the new building of Reformation, portend a fall; such hot fevers and inflammations of *Englands* languishing body, call to the Physitians to let out more blood before it can recover; which differences, if they did breake out in the dayes of a peaceable Reformation were not so prodigious; but to contend, and divide, and grow drunke, and stagger, with novelties, and every new device of unstable minded men, while the common Enemy is in the field, and the Sword of the Lord stands at every mans doore almost, this argues deep distempers, close hypocrisies, and such unreasonable wantonnesse and abuse of liberty, that the Lord Christ will not passe by without darkning the Sunne, and turning the Moone into blood, which will and shall continue, untill the Lord hath made the remnant which shall escape, a poor, weak, humble, pliable spirited people, unto the good wayes of his grace. And that which maketh those differences in reason most fatall, is this; That I verily feare there are some nether-milstones, on which the upper grind so fast, I meane some men in higher powers, who privily foment factions, and sit behind unseen, and blow the bellowes of these untimely heates and fires. The Anabaptists, and rigid Separatists (whose opinions you mention) are the usuall dispisers of Gods Ministers, and therefore prefer Tradesmen before those whom God hath guifted, and set apart for his work in the Schooles of the Prophets. They are for the most part the dreggs of sincerity, and a degenerate company falling from the Truth, which they did once professe, but did never truly love, and therefore doe so readily apostatize from all Christs Ministers

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and miniſtries: Baptiſme, ſinging of Pſalmes, Sacraments, &c. as never taſting the ſweetneſſe in them, nor feeling the mighty power of Jeſus Chriſt by them in their own hearts. The time is comming, wherein the Lord may give them their deſire, and take away his ſervants from beholding thoſe evils which are coming upon them their apoſtacie and cooling; In the meane while, the Lord will fill them with their own devices; and as they love ſchiſmes and diviſions from the Saints, and from the truth; ſo they ſhall wax worſe and worſe therein, and divide one from another, and from themſelves at laſt. We have ſeen the fruits of ſuch ſpirits in theſe parts, and how God hath caſt fire of wrath from Heaven upon ſome of that way. To cut off the hand of the Magiſtrate from touching men for their conſciences (which you alſo mention,) will certainly in time (if it get ground) be the utter overthrow, as it is the undermining, of the Reformation begun. This opinion is but one of the fortreſſes and ſtrong holds of Sathan, to keep his head from cruſhing by Chriſts heele, who (forſooth) becauſe he is crept into mens conſciences, and becauſe conſcience is a tender thing, no man muſt here meddle with him, as if conſciences were made to be the ſafeguard of ſin and errour, and Sathan himſelf, if once they can creep into them. As for *New-England*, we never baniſhed any for their conſciences, but for ſinning againſt conſcience, after due meanes of conviction, or ſome other wickedneſſe which they had no conſcience to plead for; they that cenſure *New-England* for what they have done that way, ſhould firſt heare it ſpeake, before they condemne. We have Magiſtrates, that are gratious and zealous; we have Miniſters, that are aged, and experienced, and holy and wiſe; no man was yet ever baniſhed from us, but they had the zeale and care of the one, the

holineſſe, learning and beſt abilities of the other, ſeeking their good before they were ſent from the coaſts; And when they have been baniſhed, as they have had warrant from the word, ſo God from Heaven hath ever borne witneſſe, by ſome ſtrange hand of his providence againſt them; either delivering them up to vile luſts and ſins, or to confuſion amongſt themſelves, or to ſome ſudden and terrible deaths, for their obſtinacy againſt the light, and meanes uſed to heale their conſciences: I could tell you large ſtories (if need were) of theſe things. The Familiſts and Antinomians are another ſort, who will prove (if not cruſht) the ſcourge of that Land, and the moſt ſubtle enemies to the power of godlineſſe, that *England* can have, as they were once amongſt us, and plaid their parts in theſe places: Their frame is this; By advancing free-grace, they deny, and deſtroy all being and evidence of inherent grace in us; by crying up Chriſt, they deſtroy the uſe of faith to apply him; by advancing the Spirit, and revelation by the Spirit, they deſtroy or weaken the revelation of the Scriptures; by depending upon Chriſts righteouſneſſe and juſtification, without the works of the Law, they deſtroy the uſe of the Law, and make it no rule of life unto a Chriſtian; by imagining an evidencing by juſtification, they deſtroy all evidencing by effectuall vocation and ſanctification.

Theſe and an hundred ſuch like odd fancies, theſe Churches in *New-England* have examined, and publikely condemned, and ſent to their grave, and have ſeen their buriall: And we have found theſe opinions, to be meere figg-leaves, to cover ſome diſtempers and luſts lurking in mens hearts; and hence it is, that after they be once ſealed, and be in Chriſt, and have received the witneſſe, they never doubt, though they fall into never ſo many foule ſins

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and filthineſſe; And to put finger in the eye, and to renew their repentance, they think this is weakneſſe and feebleneſſe.

But I have been perhaps too tedious: My deſire is, that the Lord God Almighty, would ſtabliſh you in his Truth, and bottom you upon Chriſt Jeſus, in theſe evill times. Take counſell of thoſe whom you know to be approved and godly Miniſters, if at any time your conſcience be ſtaggered, by reaſon of the errours of this divided, fooliſh and blind world; and remember but theſe foure things.

Firſt, Make your moanes known to Jeſus Chriſt of all your wants and ſins.

Secondly, When you have thus done, beleeve he will heare you, and doth heare you; for ſo he hath promiſed, *Heb.*7.25. chap.10.19,20,21,22.

Thirdly, If he giveth you any thing you come for, be it never ſo little, be exceeding thankfull, *Phil.*4.6.

Fourthly, If he denies to heare you, though it be never ſo long, in never ſo many things, yet be humble, and ſay; Lord, I am worthy to be rejected, and quietly ſtay here; and then you ſhall find, that whatſoever errours others fall into, or miſeries they fall under, the Lord will preſerve you, untill he ſees you in his Kingdom and glory.

We wonder at God for our peace the Lord gives us in theſe parts, we know not how to improve it. The reports of the diviſions in *New-England* are fables; The Churches are here in peace; The Common-wealth in peace; The Miniſtry in moſt ſweet peace; The Magiſtrates (I ſhould have named firſt) in peace; All our families in peace; We can ſleep in the woods in peace, without feare of the *Indians*, our feare is fallen upon them.

When

When we travell abroad, we rise up, and lye down in peace; yet this peace giveth us no rest, while our deare *England* is in trouble, for which we would weep, and we wish our heads fountaines in this wilderneſſe, for our sins there as well as others. Remember me kindly to our friends round about you. In much haſt I muſt here reſt;

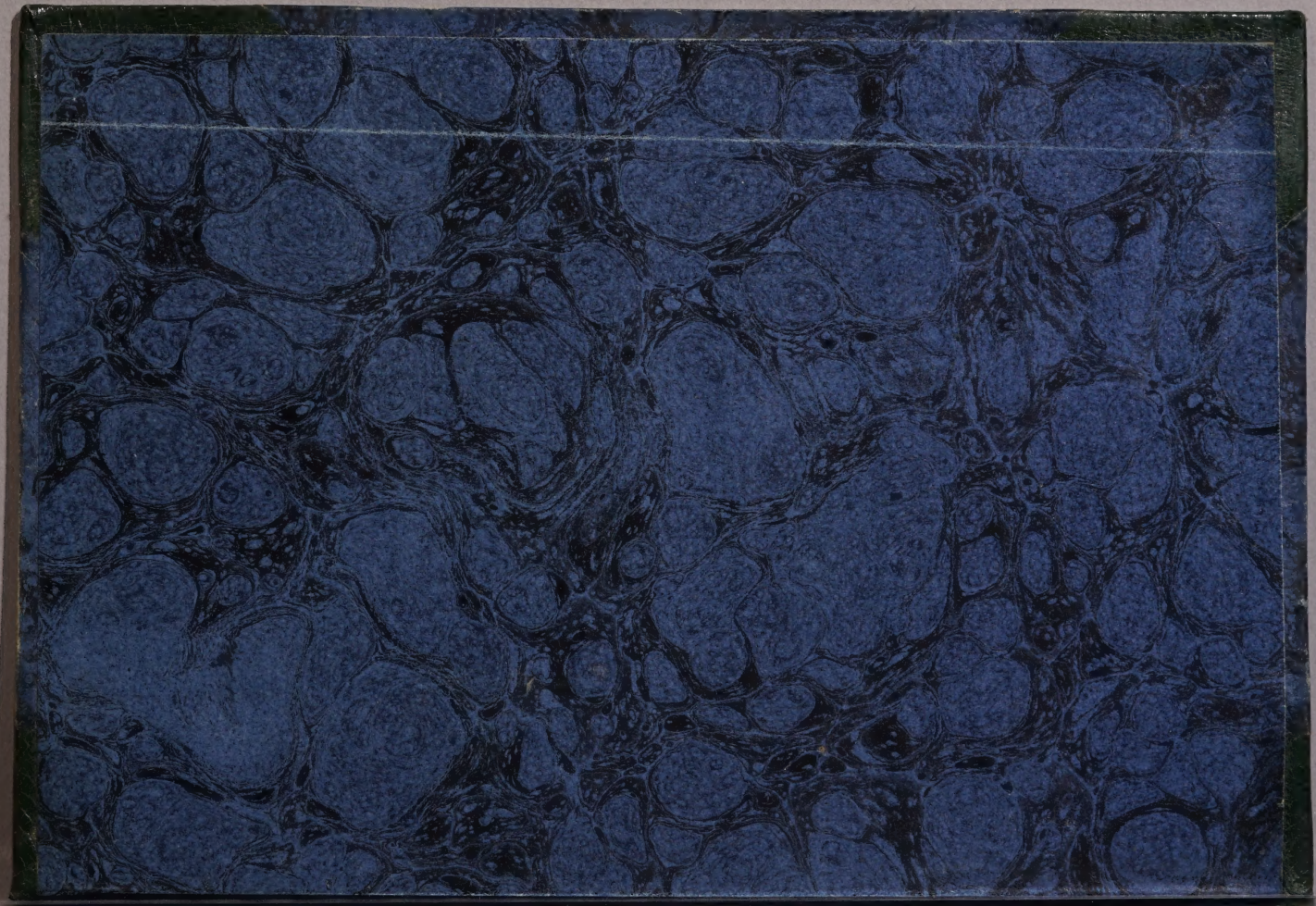
*Cambridge*, Decemb. 10. 1644. *Yours moſt unworthy,*

THO. SHEPARD.

FINIS.

Quincy, Mass. Dec 3/93.

This volume, owned for the purpose by Mr John Nicholas Brown, was used in the work of editing the Prince Society edition of Thomas Walley's Short Story, under the title of Antiquities in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, & also in the preparation of the companion work to that publication, entitled Massachusetts, its Historians and its History.

Charles Francis Adams

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